



STATE OF IDAHO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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All Idaho Invasive Species inspection stations now open

18 mussel fouled watercraft intercepted this season

Boise - The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced Monday that all 15 mandatory watercraft inspection stations are now open in Idaho. The stations are concentrated at the state line and are open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., seven days a week.

Stations began opening in March and approximately 10,000 boats have already been inspected statewide for aquatic invasive species and noxious weeds. An earlier opening date this season has provided the opportunity to inspect more boats that are coming to or through Idaho from infested waters at Lake Mead, Lake Havasu, Lake Pleasant and the Great Lakes. ISDA has intercepted 18 fouled boats, half of which were destined for Idaho waters.

"Idaho's inspection program underscores the importance of preventing these mussels from becoming established in Idaho," said Agriculture Director Celia Gould. All of Idaho's waterbodies have tested negative for these species, but they have been found in waters of other western states, and are causing severe economic and environmental harm in other states. "We continue to work with our regional partners to prevent these fouled boats from launching in Pacific Northwest waters. We need boaters to be vigilant and help us in this effort to keep them out."

Boaters should expect inspections! Quagga and zebra mussels do not occur in Idaho, and this program is prevention based. All boaters must stop at the stations. Watercraft inspectors are looking for high-risk boats that have been in quagga mussel- and zebra mussel-impacted states. All boats will be inspected for any attached mussels and/or standing water. Owners also will be asked where they have boated in the previous 30 days. **It is important that boaters arrive in Idaho with a clean, drained and dry watercraft.**

Zebra mussels and quagga mussels are invasive species. They are European in origin and range in size from microscopic to the size of a fingernail, depending on the life stage. They are prolific breeders and attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces, fouling freshwater ecosystems and clogging intake pipes that draw water from infested waterbodies. They cause significant maintenance challenges for raw-water systems, requiring millions of dollars annually to treat. Although populations have been widespread in the Great Lakes for almost two decades, these mussels were found for the first time west of the Continental Divide in the past three years, specifically in regions of Nevada, California, Arizona, Colorado and Utah.

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The state is seeking the public's help to prevent the introduction of this invasive species. Boats are the primary transporters of zebra mussels and quagga mussels. Mussels attached to watercraft or trailers can easily be transported to other waterbodies. Water in boat engines, bilges, live wells and buckets can carry microscopic mussel larvae (veligers) to other water bodies. Multiple state and federal agencies are urging boaters and watercraft users to clean, drain and dry boats and equipment before entering Idaho.

ISDA urges all boaters to take the following steps to prevent the introduction of the mussels to Idaho:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces - small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- Wash the hull thoroughly, preferably with hot water
- Remove all plant and animal material
- Drain all water and dry all areas
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit
- Clean and dry all live wells
- Empty and dry any buckets
- Dispose of all bait in the trash
- Wait five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters

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